



*From the Office of*

# Brad Mitzelfelt

Supervisor, First District  
San Bernardino County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 11, 2008

For information, contact  
David Zook (909) 387-4830  
[www.sbcounty.gov/mitzelfelt](http://www.sbcounty.gov/mitzelfelt)

---

## **Opinion: Get Ready to Get Ready; It's 'ShakeOut' Time**

By Brad Mitzelfelt

Interstate 15 through the Cajon Pass will be severed. Interstate 10 east of Redlands will be impassable. More than 200 buildings in San Bernardino will collapse. Firestorms will rage throughout the region with no water to fight them. An estimated 1,800 people will be killed.

If you live in Southern California, talk of "The Big One" is a part of the culture as much as sunshine, traffic and palm trees. The above scenario is the first-time product of a team of top scientists, engineers, economists, and emergency planners who have made a highly educated guess as to what could likely happen when the next major earthquake, in this case a magnitude 7.8, occurs along the southern section of the San Andreas Fault.

I believe that getting ready for this inevitable disaster, which I consider our greatest natural enemy, needs to become as routine as buckling your seatbelt or buying insurance. So to help motivate every resident in the County and the state to get ready, a coalition of business, community and government leaders have launched The Great Southern California ShakeOut Campaign. The ShakeOut is a series of events from November 12 through 16 that will comprise the largest earthquake disaster drill in U.S. history.

As a member of the California Seismic Safety Commission, I am honored to serve as co-chairman of the San Bernardino County ShakeOut Campaign. We have already received an impressive response from community groups, schools, churches, city governments and emergency professionals and volunteers who are interested in participating.

All 19,000 County employees have been registered as participants for the ShakeOut and we aim to involve as many of our county's 2 million residents as possible, especially at 10 a.m. November 13, when everyone in the state is encouraged to stop what they're doing and practice a "Drop, Cover and Hold On" drill.

Remember that little 5.4 quake in July? It was a good reminder to us all. But the magnitude 7.8 we're talking about would be 5,000 times more powerful. The ground will be convulsing like a small ship in a storm, six feet per second one way and then back.

Preparation takes only a few dollars and a few minutes. But doing so could save your family untold grief and hardship, and speed the recovery afterwards.

Our County is already home to a perfect example of preparation. Through an extraordinary grassroots effort, every mountain resident bought in to the need to prepare for fires. When their communities were threatened by two massive wildfires in the past few years, they knew how to respond. Last year, despite the loss of hundreds of homes, there were no fatalities and economic recovery has been quicker than expected by many.

That's the model we need to follow. All of us working together can bring this message to a critical mass, to a point where being ready is just part of the daily routine.

Remember, with thousands injured, roads cut and water unavailable, emergency responders will be swamped. You should plan to be on your own for at least several days or longer, with plenty of water, food and medicine on hand.

If you commute from the High Desert, you could be stranded down the hill while your children are still at school. Develop a family emergency plan.

In the weeks leading up to the drill, we'll be publicizing information about how to get ready. In the meantime, please go to [www.shakeout.org](http://www.shakeout.org) and spend some time looking at the information. There are amazing videos, advice for preparation, and an incredibly detailed narrative of what we can expect. More than 2 million Californians have already registered there.

Links to that and other disaster information are also on my website, [www.sbcounty.gov/mitzelfelt](http://www.sbcounty.gov/mitzelfelt), where you can watch a video of our first planning meeting, which includes a fascinating presentation by Dr. Lucy Jones of the U.S. Geological Survey.

If your school, church, school, business or community group would like more information about participating, or if you would like to have a speaker make a presentation, please contact my office at (909) 387-4830 or (760) 955-5400.

*Brad Mitzelfelt represents the First District on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and is a member of the California Seismic Safety Commission.*